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Vocational Education, Special Education and Vocational Rehabilitation: A Marriage of Professionals Needed for Handicapped Children.

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Problems of vocational education programs are discussed beginning with legislation affecting the handicapped. Provisions considered are Titles I and III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the Vocational Education Act of 1963, and the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968. The number of handicapped children served and the financial expenditures are mentioned. Vocational education in institutions is considered in connection with Public Law 89-313 and Title VI-A of ESEA, which provide federal aid. Projects located at or sponsored by the following are described: the Lincoln State School; the Branden Training School; the Berkeley Unified School District; the New Hampshire State Department of Education; and the Board of Education, New York. The contributions of vocational education, vocational rehabilitation, and special education to training the handicapped and the coordination of programs are discussed. Also discussed are the work of the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped and its divisions of research, training programs, and educational services, major objectives in the field of vocational education, and the intent of Congress on coordination of efforts. (RJ)

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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, SPECIAL EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

A MARRIAGE OF PROFESSIONALS NEEDED FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

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AN ADDRESS MADE AT

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

FOR HANDICAPPED PERSONS

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by

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1969

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PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

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A famed lecturer once developed a technique to catch the attention and interest of his audience. At the beginning of his speech he would take a small rubber ball out of his pocket and hold it up for the audience to see. He would then ask the audience the color of the ball. He could always count on someone shouting back that the ball was red. He would then proceed to disagree and say, "No, the ball is really blue." After some argument back and forth, he would turn the ball around and show the audience that the ball was really colored half red and half blue. The appearance of the ball, of course, depended on the perspective that one approached the object. In a very real sense we face a similar situation with regard to the role of handicapped children as a result of the passage of the Vocational Education Act amendments. If you look at the new amendments from one aspect, they represent a great opportunity for the handicapped. On the other hand from another point of view, the amendments may be seen as a threat by creating new administrative problems for vocational education.

We would be remiss if we failed to see that both of these elements are involved in the new responsibilities for the handicapped in vocational education programs. I believe it is the responsibility of special education to show that vocational education has had something like the life of a bachelor.

While it may have been free of some stresses and strains, it also has the disadvantage of lacking the stimulation that only a fruitful professional marriage can bring about.

I realize that in saying this I run the risk of having the analogy continued with a discussion about shotgun weddings. However, the opportunities involved are so great that I think we need to expend all our efforts to build a meaningful component for the handicapped within the vocational education framework. In a very real sense this component represents the completion of the educational cycle for handicapped children. For many years, as the special educators in this audience are well aware, special education existed mainly to serve youngsters from the age of 8 to about 14. Children with moderate handicaps often failed one or two years in school before they were identified. These children rarely received special education services during the first two years of school, much less at the preschool level. All too often these programs came to an abrupt halt when the youngster moved from the elementary to the secondary level, and as a result the child frequently dropped out of school completely.

Many vocational educators might be interested in the question as to why Congress created special set-aside funding for handicapped children. I think the answer is clear. It has to be seen in the perspective of the greatly increased Congressional interest and commitment to the problems of more than 5,000,000 handicapped

children in the nation over the last five years. In particular, those members of Congress who have especially committed themselves to a major improvement in educational programs for the handicapped have been convinced that merely providing general education resources does not guarantee that these resources will find their way into unproved programs for the handicapped. Instead, they have sufficient evidence to support their judgment that these general education resources will not be utilized sufficiently to serve the handicapped.

For example, the handicapped were presumed to have a major role in Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. However, a careful analysis of the programs under way showed that only about 3% of the programs -- at the maximum -- were serving handicapped children.

Again, Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Supplementary Centers and Services, provided for another general education program that, theoretically, had many resources available for the handicapped. However, analysis indicated that a little over 3% of the funds was being spent on the handicapped, and fourteen states spent no money at all on the handicapped! What proof is there that the set-aside method is more effective? Since the 15% set-aside for the handicapped was placed in the Title III program, more financial support for handicapped programs was provided in a six months' period than in the previous three years of the general program.

In vocational education it was clear that a similar pattern existed. Theoretically, the resources of the Vocational Education Act of 1963 offered the opportunity to improve programs for the handicapped at the crucial level where it should serve as a bridge between the school and the individual's work situation. However, in actuality the benefits of the expensive special education programs were being lost through failure to close the gap by implementing the bridging phase between schooling and adequate work opportunities. We find very limited resources from the vocational education program being applied in this important area.

During the fiscal year 1967, for example, over $198,000,000 was appropriated for the Vocational Education Act of 1963 of which only $6.7 million (3.3%) was expended on persons with special needs. For fiscal year 1968, $8.4 million (3.7%) was utilized for this purpose. Since students with special needs include the disadvantaged as well as the handicapped, it is difficult to obtain a specific figure for the handicapped alone. Some informed observers estimate the figure to be less than 1%!

Accordingly, the pattern that was already established with Title I and with Title III in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was continued in the Vocational Education amendments of 1968. The emphasis in the new Vocational Education amendments is people-oriented, rather than occupationally-oriented. This approach fits in well with the new emphasis on the handicapped.

As we look at the various vocational education or pre-vocational education components in existing authorities for the handicapped, it is clear that one of these programs is providing a greater emphasis in this direction -- the programs operating under Public Law 89-313, Aid to State and State-Supported Institutions. The fact that Public Law 89-313 programs show a greater interest in vocational education than either the Title VI-A or the Title III programs requires some explanation. One of the more reasonable explanations is that in an institutional setting the handicapped youngster finds himself in a continuing educational program. He does not face the artificial breaks that occur in public school programs when the youngster moves from elementary school to junior high school and from junior high school to senior high school. As a result, the State supported institution is in a position to seriously take on a commitment to prepare the youngster for the working world. In the public school, with divided administration at various levels, it is easy to let a handicapped youngster slip away or not to articulate in a way that would provide a meaningful vocational educational experience at the secondary school level.

We do not lack for outstanding examples of how vocational education experience can be provided for the handicapped. However, these experiences are isolated, and are not easily fixed into the

existing educational structure. They are, by all odds, the exception rather than the rule as education is presently organized. Nevertheless, I thought you would be interested in some of the kinds of vocational education programs that are now being supported for the handicapped.

Here are a few citations to give you the flavor of the kind of projects now being supported under P.L. 89-313, which provides for State and State supported institutions, and the Title VI-A program to extend and expand educational programs for the handicapped within the States.

In the Title I Projects the emphasis on vocational education was found mainly in institutions for the mentally retarded, such as:

1) The Lincoln State School, Lincoln, Illinois. This is a work-study phase, pre-vocational education program. The program is a pilot study concerned with the feasibility of supplying essential vocational attitudes, work habits, and underlying social skills required for successful independent adult adjustment. Regularly scheduled measurements are made of students in experimental and control groups. Close cooperation is maintained with community agencies, especially the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, in order to provide continuity for pre-vocational education from institutional to non-institutional surroundings.

2) The Branden Training School, Branden, Vermont. This is a component of a 1968 P.L. 89-313 project. This school instituted a 12-week summer basic vocational training program for 45 educable retarded adolescents. This project clearly demonstrated the merit and need for permanent and full-time basic vocational trainers. As a result of this past summer's project, we received the report that "it has become self-evident that the adolescent educable retarded can and does desire to learn job skills."

In the Title VI programs we can see a broader approach, together with a specific emphasis on pre-vocational efforts. For example:

1) The Berkeley Unified School District, Berkeley, California. This project involved the instruction of ten visually handicapped students in a 6 weeks' summer program for totally blind high school students. The project involved intensive instruction in mobility training, food preparation, grooming, handwriting, vocational training and activities of daily living in a setting away from family dependence.

2) The New Hampshire State Department of Education, Concord, New Hampshire. This project is a State Summer Program of Educational Social and Vocational Services for Deaf and Neurologically Impaired Males at the Crotched Mountain Center, Greenfield, New Hampshire. The focus of the project

was to test a program design for extending educational, vocational rehabilitation, recreation, and social service activities to neurologically impaired and/or deaf youth of labor market age. The program was designed to increase the chance for vocational success of individuals whose sensory disabilities have hindered their academic achievement and limited their recreational and social skills, through the application of expanded and intensive supportive services administered concomitantly. Highlight of the program was the first joint funding of a program in New Hampshire including Vocational-Technical Education Funds - Crotched Mountain Funds and Title VI Elementary and Secondary Education Act Funding. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation cooperated and contributed its resources to the program operation.

3) The Board of Education, New York, New York. This is a work-study program, stressing vocational experiences and self-evaluation, and encompasses approximately 900 Junior-Senior High School students with retarded development. Vocational evaluation and exploration in a workshop setting, as well as on-job tryout experience, were included. The age range of pupils is 15-18, with I.Q.'s between 50 and 75. This Title VI Project provided an extension of the existing New York City program, thus enabling all mentally retarded

pupils in classes of 13 New York City High Schools to receive the benefits of vocational training.

As in any complex issue requiring a wide range of skills and training, no one discipline can do the job alone. Vocational education, vocational rehabilitation and special education all have something to offer.

What are the differential skills that each of these specialists can bring to this complex problem?

Vocational Rehabilitation - Since this discipline is often the closest of the three to the actual job placement situation it would have much weight to bring to bear on the issue of general program objectives, of continuous vocational evaluation and counseling, and job market applicability. They can provide feedback on program effectiveness since performance on the job must be one of the essential outputs of a work-study or vocational program.

Vocational Education - This discipline can bring to the team its planning and special instructional skills related to general vocational education planning. An invaluable contribution it can make is the utilization of its techniques for the handicapped with the aid of special services in fitting the handicapped into the regular vocational program, since it should not be imagined

that handicapped persons will always be removed from the regular vocational education program. Vocational education can provide specific instructions in occupational areas designed especially for the handicapped.

Special Education - This discipline has as its major contribution a sense of continuity and programming related to the total educational program of the handicapped child. It also has special abilities to sequence instructional activities individually or in small groups. In the case of those handicapped youngsters under special education programs, the special educators have the final responsibility of the total design of the educational program so that it meets not only the work study needs, but other necessary educational and social goals as well.

One of the most serious problems to be resolved in the design of programs in the area of vocational education for the handicapped is where and how the educational coordination shall take place. There is little doubt that all of the elements of these three areas need to be included in a total program. Any program in the area of vocational education for the handicapped that does not include meaningful components from all three of these disciplines will be the poorer for their lack.

I would like to suggest one answer to that question from my own educational philosophy. This conviction stems from the standpoint of personally observing inefficient services delivered to handicapped children. I can say this, because I was on the delivery end of some of those inefficient systems many years ago when I served as a psychologist in a child guidance clinic. The essential problem with the system of delivery services was the confusion about who or what agency should determine the nature of the program. The greater prestige carried by the professionals in the field of psychiatry, clinical psychology, and psychiatric social work clearly carried the day in any policy discussions with educators.

In retrospect, I now can see that this was the wrong approach and that the real key member of any team should have been the educator and the key agency-the schools. However, the educator must be ready to be the leader of a team and should be capable of constructively using a wide variety of professional resources. If the educator is not ready to accept responsibility, he will either misuse the available professional resources, or studiously ignore their existence, thus seriously diminishing the potential benefits to the handicapped child. While the educator must be the person who will organize and sequence the activities for the maximum benefit of the child, he must include a wide variety of services that lie beyond his particular discipline.

I refer particularly to the major contribution that has been, and will continue to be made, in the field of vocational rehabilitation. In this regard, we need to pay careful attention to the successes of vocational rehabilitation in order to see how the various activities of educational programs need to be sequenced, and obtain the necessary coordination between services that will mean the most to the handicapped.

It is very tempting, in a situation where there are strong professional consultants and not-so-strong educators or schools to have the consultants take charge of the program and direct it. The psychologist and speech therapist once played a similar role and converted the special education teacher to their discipline's point of view. I do not believe that in the long run this is a feasible solution. The answer to the problem is not accomplished by getting the schools to abdicate their responsibilities; rather it lies in strengthening the educators and the schools so that they can play their proper role adequately.

The intent of Congress that the area of the handicapped have an increased policy voice in the vocational education field is indicated in the specific provisions of the Act calling for the inclusion on the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education who is, "experienced in the education and training of handicapped persons..." and on the State advisory council at least one member should "...having special knowledge, experience, or qualifications,

with respect to the special educational needs of physically or mentally handicapped persons."

What resources does the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped have and what can it do to encourage constructive activities in blending the fields of vocational and special education and rehabilitation? The Bureau administers those programs devoted to educational programming for the handicapped through the U. S. Office of Education. "Handicapped" in Federal legislation refers to mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, crippled, or other health impaired children, who by reason thereof require special education. This group of children make up 10% of the nation's school age population. For many years, there were only a handful of employees in the Office of Education concerned about education for the handicapped. Today, there are over one hundred employees, and we operate with an annual budget of more than $100 million. The Bureau of Education for the Handicapped has three operating divisions, representing a broad spectrum of activities in the field of educating handicapped children.

The Division of Research supports investigators and organizations in research and related areas designed to produce the maximum educational benefit for the

handicapped. With the $11.1 million appropriated in fiscal year 1968, over 100 investigators were supported, a major research and demonstration center was established, and $2.5 million has been invested in a national network of 14 Instructional Materials Centers designed to make readily available to teachers of handicapped children the latest in materials and media. During this year we hope to fund more Research and Development Centers, which will concentrate efforts on major problem areas in education for the handicapped.

The Division of Training Programs provides support to institutions of higher learning and to State educational agencies so that programs for the preparation of special education personnel can be supported or expanded. In fiscal year 1969, $29.7 million will be awarded to 261 public and private non-profit institutions of higher education and to State education agencies in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, to provide support for undergraduate and graduate students and the university training programs that prepare such specialists. Over 18,000 students will receive part-time or full-time support to improve their abilities to deal with the difficult educational problems of handicapped children.

The Division of Educational Services provides for the distribution of resources to assure that educational services for the handicapped can be initiated, expanded, or extended at the local and/or State educational levels. In fiscal year 1968 over $38 million was committed to improve the educational programs for the handicapped in the States and in institutions throughout the country.

In addition to these three divisional units we have a Program Planning and Evaluation Staff, an Information and Reports Staff, and a Program Implementation Staff connected with the Bureau.

Where are we now? What are some of the major objectives that we, as special educators, wish to achieve with a new effort for the handicapped in the field of vocational education? We hope this and subsequent conferences will help delineate these goals. Certainly one objective would seem to be the expansion of model and exemplary programs that will provide the kind of practical demonstration necessary to convince school personnel that vocational education planning for the handicapped is not only feasible, but highly desirable. It is easy for educators, who are made nervous and vaguely disconcerted by the presence of children whose problems

they do not understand, to convince themselves that these youngsters are better served somewhere else, anywhere else! We need to have practical examples, easily available and understandable, for such educators to help cut through this kind of negative rationalization.

We also need to give major attention to the area of training. Such training needs involve a number of meaningful dimensions. For example:

1) We need to bring more vocational educators into contact with the field of the handicapped and provide them with training in the special needs, problems and instructional techniques required to work with handicapped children.

2) Then there are the special educators whose knowledge and background in the area of vocational education are extremely limited and whose skills need to be upgraded.

3) At the very minimum, we must reach and inform the leadership personnel in all coordinating disciplines.

The expectation for coordination of efforts between disciplines is a very clear intent of Congress as indicated in the Senate Report on the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968. This report states the following:

"That all State vocational education agencies be required to develop jointly with the State special education agency a comprehensive plan providing vocational education for the handicapped and that this plan be coordinated with the general State vocational education plan.

That plans for vocational education for the handicapped consider the needs of such persons in day and residential facilities whether public or private.

That State plans consider the unique problems of educating handicapped persons in rural and urban communities. It is suggested that the use of regional vocational education be considered, including regional residential schools for children with low incidence disabilities.

That efforts be undertaken in each State to coordinate the activities of vocational education, vocational rehabilitation and special education to insure the continuity and broad use of resources."

As we look at existing programs for the handicapped, it is clear that there are more programs for the mentally retarded in vocational education than for other handicapped children. For

example, there are few programs designed for the seriously emotionally disturbed or for those who have minor neurological problems which result in special learning disabilities. One of the great potentials for increased efforts in the area of the handicapped is that a greater focus would be directed to areas given little attention at the present time.

John Gardner, former Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, made a great deal of sense in his latest book, No Easy Victories, when he pointed out one source of our current discontent. He said:

> "Once it was thought that the woes of this world were immutable-ordained by God or an inscrutable Nature, or simply a part of the unchanging order of things.
>
> But for the past three centuries man has gained increasing confidence, justified or not, that he can rid himself of at least some of the ancient afflictions.
>
> ...The man who once cursed his fate now curses himself and pays the psychoanalyst...What had been a fervent prayer to an unseen Deity becomes an angry shout at political and institutional leaders."

We need to be careful that we do not fall into the trap of cursing ourselves when complex organizational problems frustrate us. There is an enemy, a real enemy, but it is not our colleagues in related disciplines. It is <u>ignorance</u> of how to best organize ourselves to deliver services to the handicapped. It is this enemy to which all our energies and efforts need to be directed.